

# AKIRA

3

KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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translation and english-language adaptation

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# AKIRA

KATSUHIRO OTOMO



## AKIRA BOOK THREE

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The artwork of this volume has been produced as a mirror-image of the original Japanese edition to conform to English-language standards.

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**BOOK  
THREE**



DARK HORSE COMICS®

# THE STORY SO FAR

Thirty-eight years after a cataclysmic explosion levels Tokyo and triggers World War III, Neo-Tokyo has risen from the ashes and prepares for the first postwar Olympic games, a stadium being erected on the original blast site. While making an unauthorized run into the blast zone, a teenage motorcycle gang led by Kaneda encounters a prematurely aged child with fantastic telekinetic power. The child, who has the number 26 on his palm, accidentally injures Kaneda's friend Tetsuo and suddenly vanishes. Military police arrive and whisk Tetsuo away for medical attention. Later, Kaneda meets the beautiful Kei, part of an underground resistance group opposed to the activities in the old city. An unexpected second meeting with Number 26 escalates into mayhem as a team led by the mysterious Colonel arrives to capture the ailing child, named Takashi, by utilizing the aid of another child psychic, Masaru. Amidst the ensuing psychic maelstrom, Kei and her associate Ryu fight their way to safety and Kaneda manages to escape, taking a capsule dropped by Takashi, intended to ease his suffering. A friend tries to identify the drug, but the substance is unregistered and too potent for human consumption.

Tetsuo returns to his friends relatively unharmed but unstable and paranoid. When electroencephalograms indicate Tetsuo's potential for vast psychic abilities, the Colonel takes him to a special facility for further tests. Another child psychic, Kiyoko, foretells the awakening of Akira, a revelation that sends shockwaves through the corridors of power. For nearly four decades, Akira, whose godlike psychic might destroyed Tokyo and brought the world to the brink of Armageddon, has been kept in frozen stasis in a high-security complex deep beneath the Olympic site. Akira is Number 26 of a clandestine program gone horribly wrong.

Tetsuo's dormant powers suddenly switch on and, steeped in growing pain, he escapes the facility, leaving a trail of death. Wandering the streets in agony, Tetsuo is jumped by a rival gang, the drug-dealing Clowns. Tetsuo murders an adversary in a grisly psychic explosion and the gang's mollified chieftain, Joker, crowns

the superhuman madman their new leader. The Tetsuo-led Clowns begin a violent rampage against rival bike gangs. Kaneda organizes the gangs to fight the Clowns, but Tetsuo dispatches them, killing Kaneda's friend Yamagata. Enraged, Kaneda shoots Tetsuo, who unleashes a storm of destruction. The Colonel and his forces arrive to find the wounded Tetsuo screaming for drugs to ease his pain. Kaneda attacks again, and in the struggle the mystery capsule drops from his pocket. Even as the Colonel warns Tetsuo that the drug is lethal, Tetsuo swallows it and goes into a massive seizure. Apparently dead, Tetsuo incredibly rises.

Kei tries to help Kaneda escape, but Tetsuo stops them. The super-drug has quelled Tetsuo's pain, and the Colonel tells Tetsuo that he can supply him with the drug and training to fully utilize his power. Tetsuo, realizing he has few alternatives when the pain returns, becomes Number 41. The Colonel takes Tetsuo, Kaneda, and Kei to the laboratory facility and puts Kaneda and Kei in lockdown.

Meanwhile, Nezu, leader of the resistance, meets with Ryu, who has infiltrated the Olympic Stadium work force. Ryu reports of suspicious military activity at a sewage treatment site adjacent to the Stadium. After the meeting, Nezu is summoned by Lady Miyako, a mystical figure who tells Nezu of her visions of a great impending calamity, a disaster which cannot be averted. The day of Akira's awakening draws closer.

Tetsuo undergoes tests that show his power to be growing at an astonishing rate, evidenced by the complete self-healing of the deadly bullet wound administered only hours earlier. Tetsuo learns of the existence of Akira and the other child psychics, and he becomes obsessed with confronting them. The children, sensing Tetsuo's potential for freeing Akira, use their abilities to free Kei and Kaneda and lead them to a secret armory where the two procure a laser rifle powerful enough to destroy Tetsuo before he grows beyond control.

Tetsuo forces the Doctor to take him to the children, who are with the Colonel. Tetsuo recognizes Number 26 and begins to torment the children, whose combined powers are no longer his match. Tetsuo demands to meet Akira. This possibility is unthinkable to the Colonel, but the Doctor sees a unique

opportunity: Tetsuo may become powerful enough to help control Akira. The Colonel resists, but Tetsuo decides that the time to meet Akira is now, and he brutalizes the Colonel along with the children until Kei and Kaneda crash the party and attack Tetsuo with the laser rifle. Tetsuo responds with an earthquake of telekinetic force, but collapsing rubble forces him to teleport outside the skyscraper facility, where he plunges to the ground below. The only effect on Tetsuo is to elicit his laughter.

Kei and Kaneda break free from the building with the help from one of the Colonel's own agents. The Colonel, though, soon forgets about Kaneda and Kei when he discovers that while he was unconscious, the Doctor had revealed the location of Akira's imprisonment. Meanwhile, Kei leads Kaneda and her benefactor into the sewers, the hidden back door into the secret underground complex holding the sleeping Akira.

Tetsuo arrives at the "waste treatment facility," a front for the subterranean Akira complex. Guards and guns are no match for the murderous psychic juggernaut, and Tetsuo enters the complex, leaving blood and bodies behind him. He boards an elevator and begins the long descent to Akira's sleep chamber. The Colonel and a force of scientists and soldiers arrive on the scene, and the troops attack Tetsuo, who repels the heavily armed force. The scientists discover to their horror that the temperature within Akira's sleep chamber is beginning to rise. Akira is responding to Tetsuo's psychic vibrations!

The chambers holding Akira begin to crack, releasing the sub-zero refrigerant used to keep Akira in stasis, killing the Doctor, and forcing Kei, Kaneda, and the troops to flee the facility. Tetsuo, miraculously unharmed by the deadly cold, reaches the chamber, and the holding cell finally bursts open. Akira emerging, dazed and confused after his decades-long sleep. A city-wide emergency ensues, marking the release of the dangerous mental giant. Tetsuo helps the child out of the complex and back to the outside world. The frantic Colonel employs a last-ditch plan to stop the two by using the laser cannon of SOL, a military satellite, to gun down Tetsuo and Akira. The cannon opens fire and the terrible blast fends Tetsuo's arm, leaving it to shreds.



KANEDA



TETSUO



KEI



RYU



TAKASHI



THE COLONEL



MASARU



KIYOKO



JOKER



NEZU



LADY MIYAKO



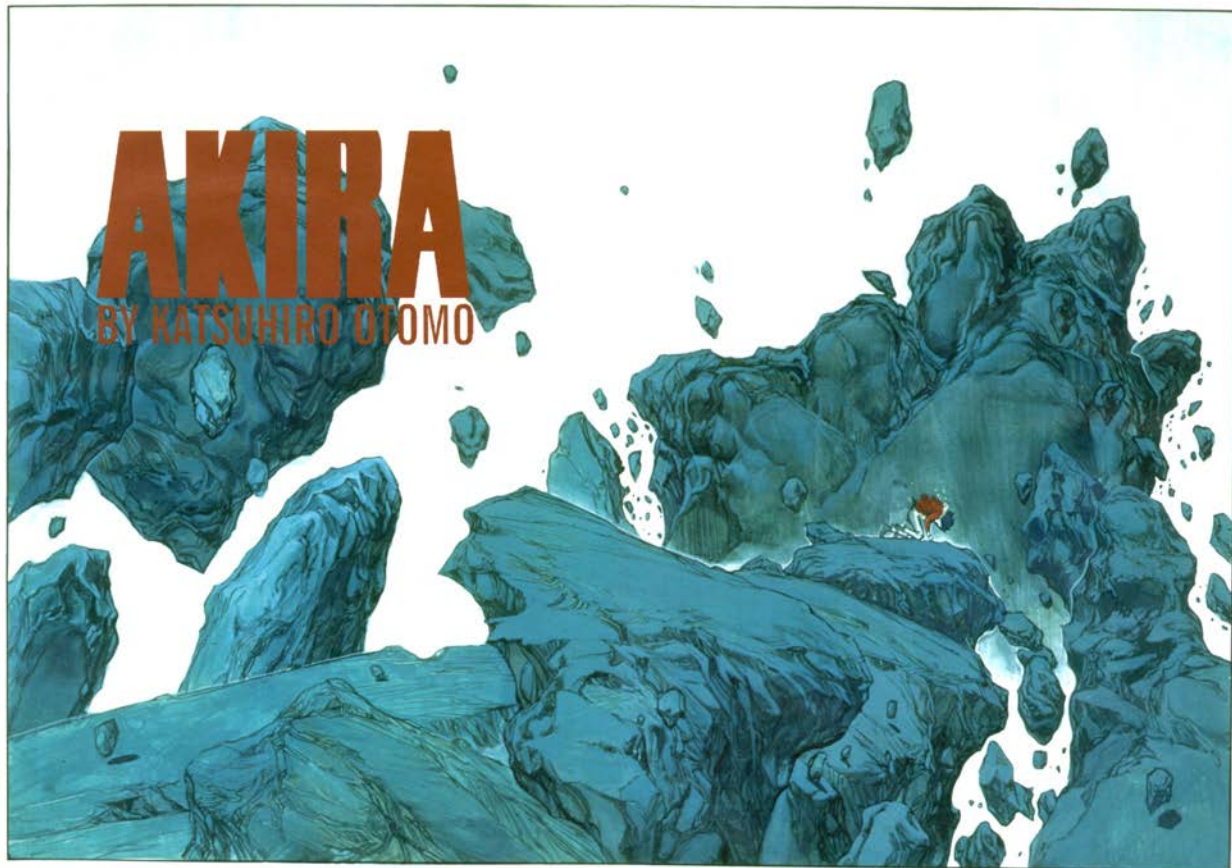
AKIRA





# AKIRA

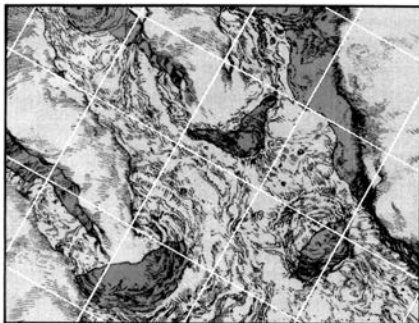
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

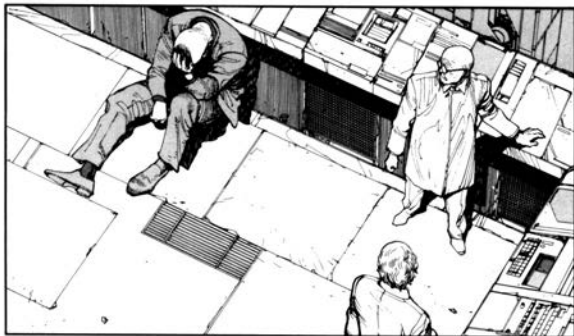


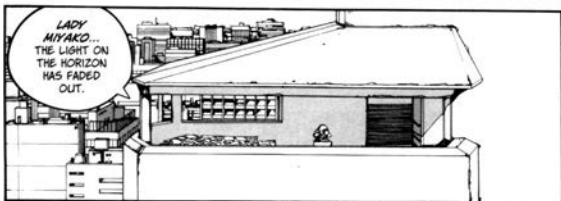


TETSUO COULDN'T  
HAVE SURVIVED THAT  
BLAST...









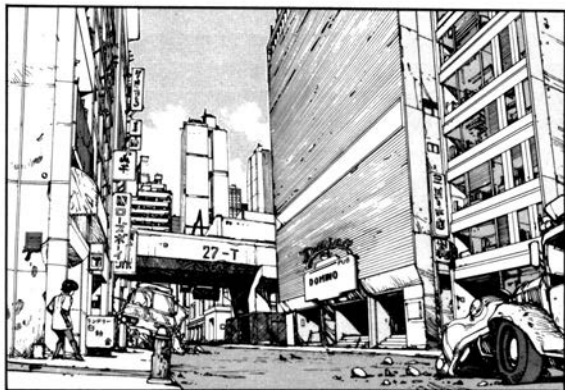


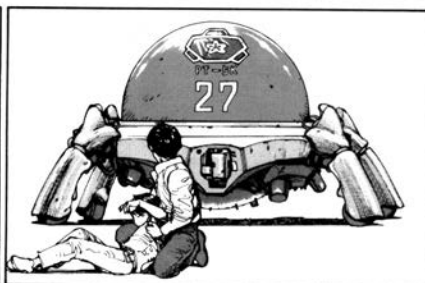














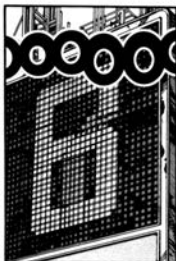






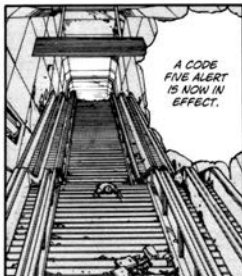








ALL CITIZENS  
MAY LEAVE  
THE SHELTERS  
AND RETURN  
HOME.



A CODE  
FIVE ALERT  
IS NOW IN  
EFFECT.



BE ADVISED  
THAT YOU ARE  
STILL UNDER  
MARTIAL LAW.



THIS IS  
STILL A STATE  
OF NATIONAL  
EMERGENCY.

THE  
FOLLOWING  
WILL NOW  
BE RECEIVING  
DIRECTIVES  
FROM THE  
GOVERNMENT--



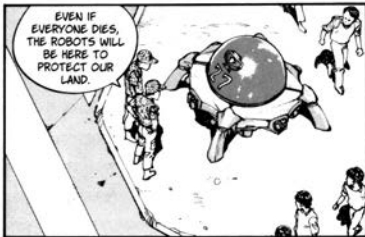
--ALL PEACE  
OFFICERS, THE  
RAILROADS AND  
SUBWAYS, POST  
OFFICES...

...ALL  
COMMUNICATION  
AND INFORMATION  
NETWORKS...ALL  
SCHOOLS...

THESE  
ORDERS MUST  
BE OBEYED BY  
ALL PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE  
SERVICES...













DON'T BE  
ABSURD!

BUT...

WE CANNOT  
GO ON AS IF  
NOTHING HAS  
HAPPENED!

NO  
BUTS!



BUT ALL  
INFORMATION  
REGARDING  
AKIRA IS TOP  
SECRET!

WE  
CAN HARDLY  
ISSUE A PRESS  
RELEASE TO  
THAT EFFECT!

PRECISELY  
MY POINT!

LISTEN...

SHUT  
UP AND SIT  
DOWN!

LISTEN  
TO ME!!



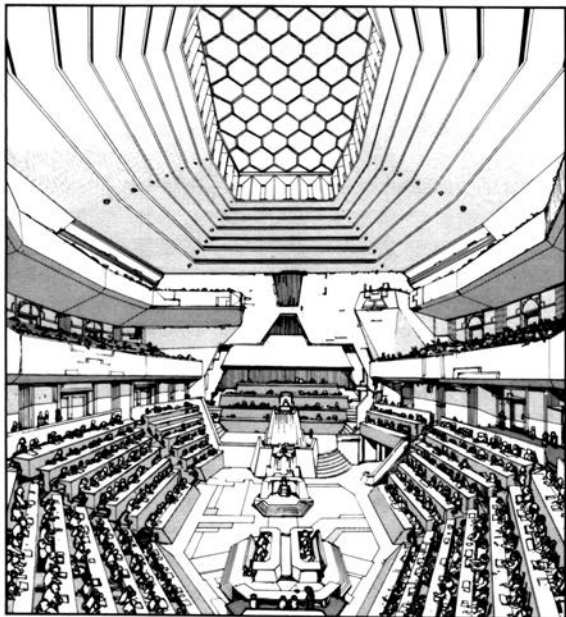
TOP SECRET? IT'S  
TOO LATE TO TALK  
ABOUT SECRETS! THE  
MEDIA ALREADY  
KNOW!

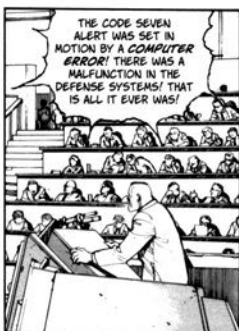
WE MUST FIND  
THE SOURCE OF  
THE LEAK!

AT THE  
MOMENT, THAT'S  
NOT OUR CHIEF  
CONCERN!

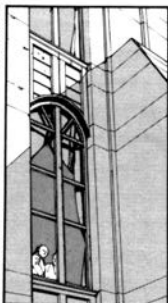
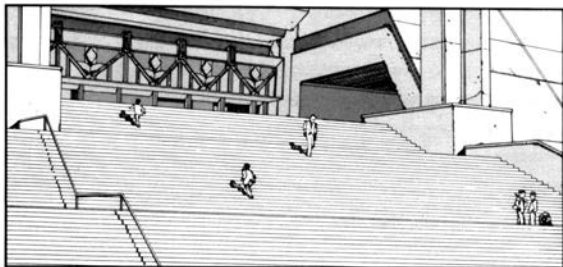
WHAT  
MATTERS  
NOW IS THE  
NUMBER OF  
CASUALTIES  
ARISING FROM  
THE CODE  
SEVEN  
ALERT!







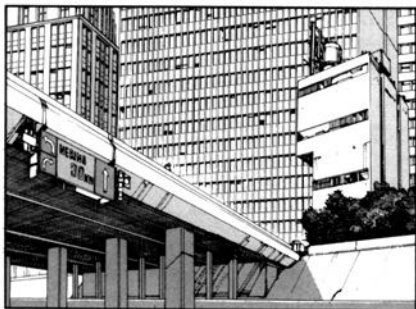


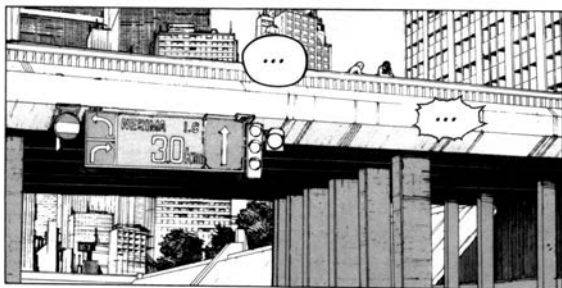


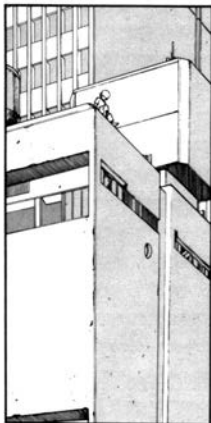






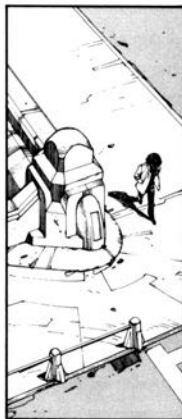






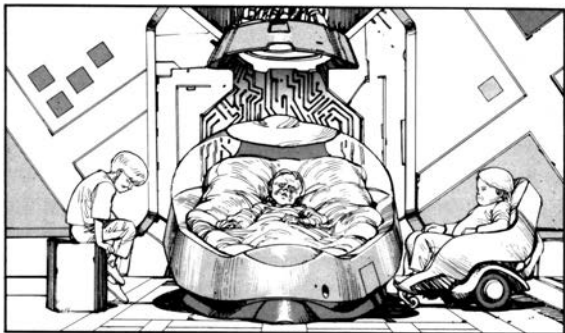
NO PROBLEM.  
WHERE WILL YOU BE?











TELL ME,  
KIYOKO, IS NUMBER  
41 STILL ALIVE?



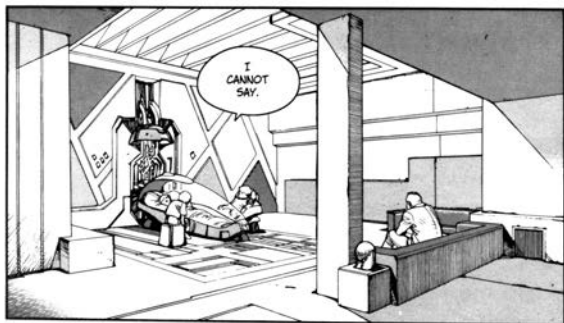
I CANNOT  
SAY. WHAT  
ELSE...?

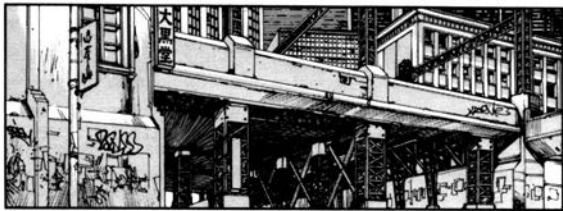
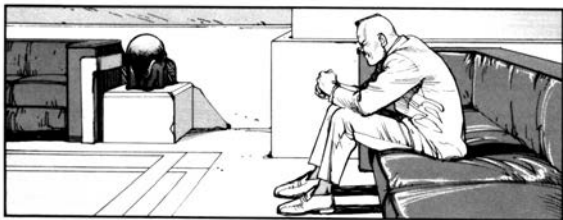


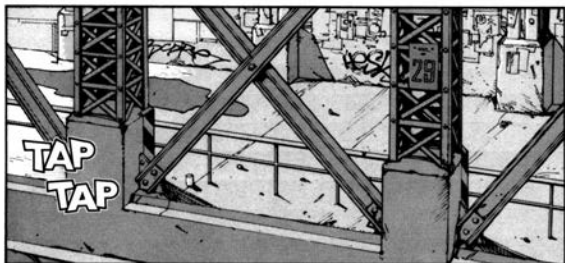
I MUST FIND  
OUT WHERE HE  
IS NOW.

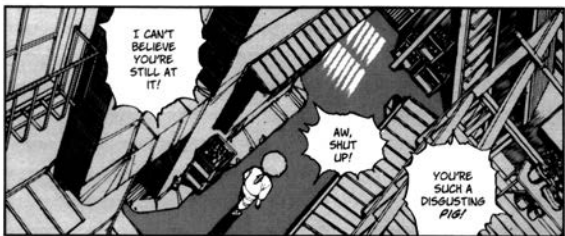


YOU'VE  
ALREADY TOLD  
ME AKIRA HAS  
RISEN.







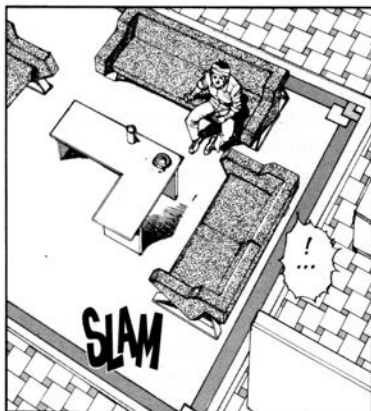




















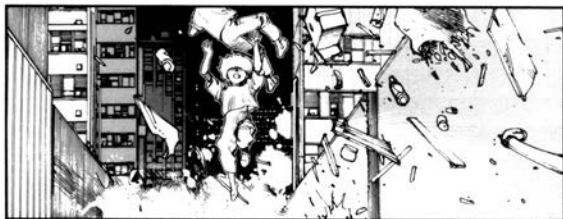




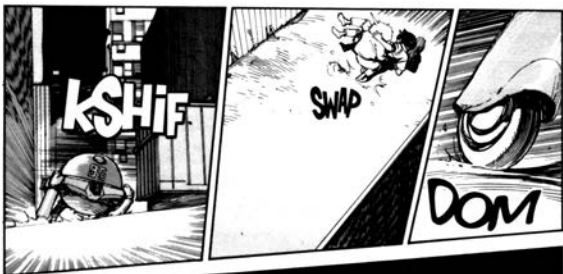






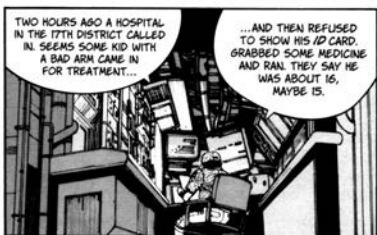










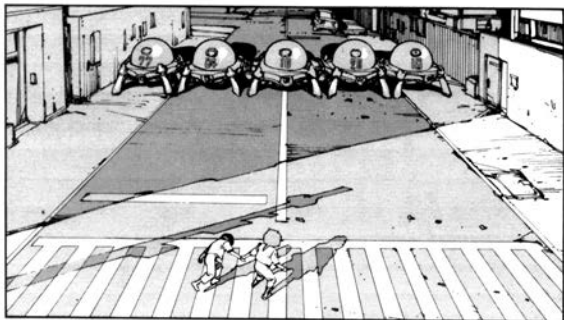
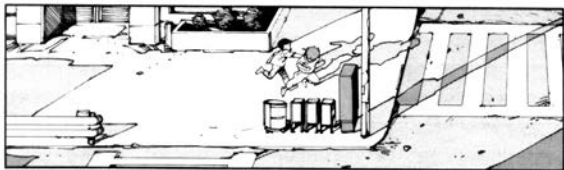


...AND THEN REFUSED TO SHOW HIS ID CARD. GRABBED SOME MEDICINE AND RAN. THEY SAY HE WAS ABOUT 16, MAYBE 15.





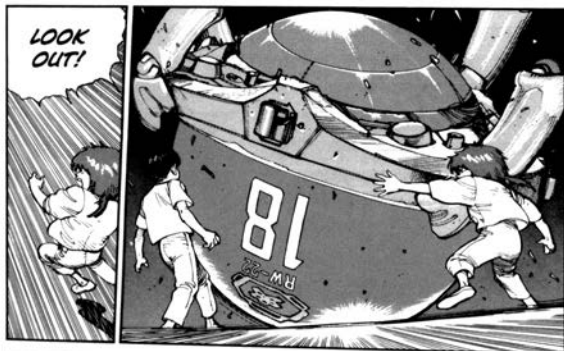








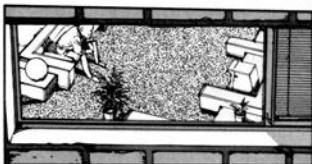
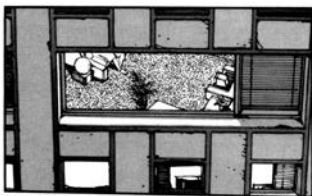






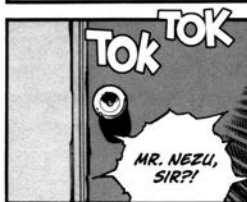


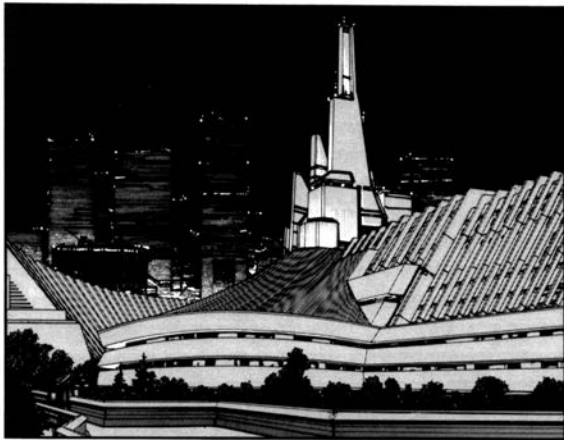




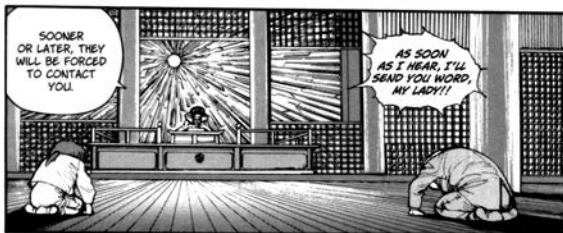










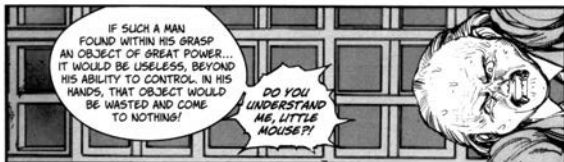






ALL  
MEN...

...ARE BORN WITH  
CERTAIN CAPABILITIES...  
AND CERTAIN LIMITATIONS.  
AND EVEN A MAN OF GREAT  
LIMITATIONS MAY IMAGINE  
HIMSELF A MAN OF  
GREAT CAPABILITY.



IF SUCH A MAN  
FOUND WITHIN HIS GRASP  
AN OBJECT OF GREAT POWER...  
IT WOULD BE USELESS, BEYOND  
HIS ABILITY TO CONTROL. IN HIS  
HANDS, THAT OBJECT WOULD  
BE WASTED AND COME  
TO NOTHING!

DO YOU  
UNDERSTAND  
ME, LITTLE  
MOUSE?



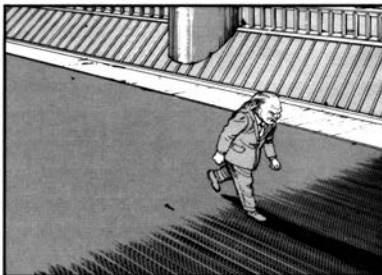
YOU MAY GET  
UP NOW.

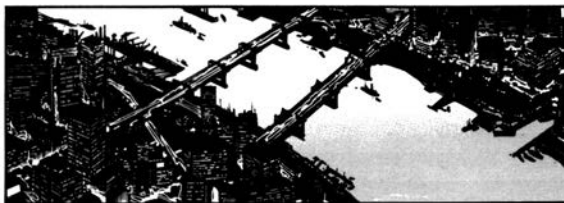


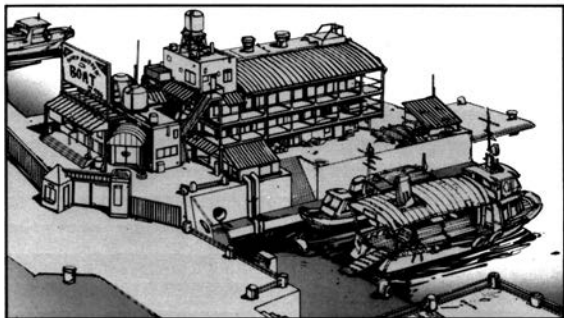
YES, MY  
LADY!



THANK YOU  
FOR SHARING YOUR  
WISDOM. I WON'T  
FORGET IT.











BE CAREFUL  
ON THE GANG-  
PLANK.



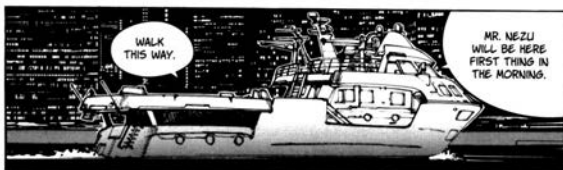
MR. NEZU  
SENT ME.

SOMETHING  
URGENT CAME  
UP OR HE'D HAVE  
MET YOU IN  
PERSON.



FOR THE  
MOMENT...

...HE'D LIKE  
YOU ALL TO  
JUST REST  
AND TAKE IT  
EASY.



WALK  
THIS WAY.

MR. NEZU  
WILL BE HERE  
FIRST THING IN  
THE MORNING.

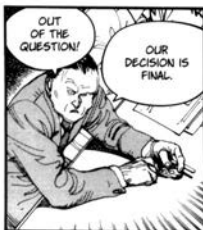


WHAT?!

**BLOM**

DON'T TELL  
ME YOU ACTUALLY  
BELIEVE YOUR OWN  
PROPAGANDA?!

COLONEL...





ARROGANT  
FOOLS!



"IN LIGHT OF THE  
PREVAILING SOCIAL  
CLIMATE WE MUST  
LIFT MARTIAL LAW  
BY TOMORROW."

TAP

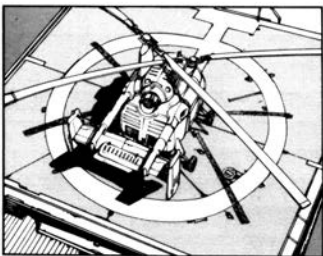
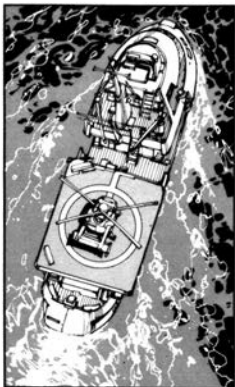
TAP  
TAP



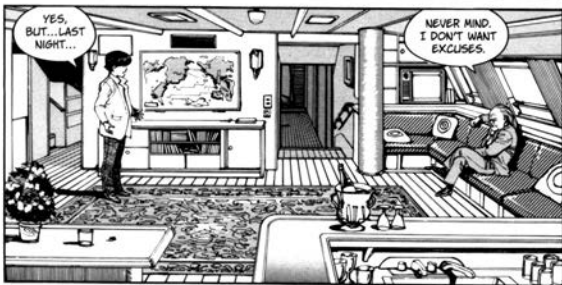
"LESS PRESSING  
CONCERNS CAN WAIT  
UNTIL A LATER DATE...  
COLONEL, YOU WILL BE  
PLACED UNDER HOUSE  
ARREST. I SUGGEST  
YOU TRY TO...RELAX."







DIDN'T I TELL  
YOU TO COME  
ALONE?

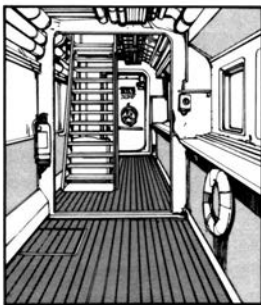
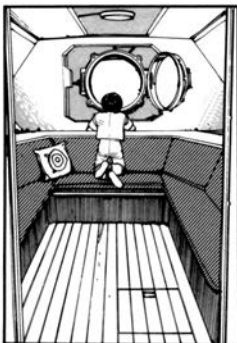


YES,  
BUT....LAST  
NIGHT...

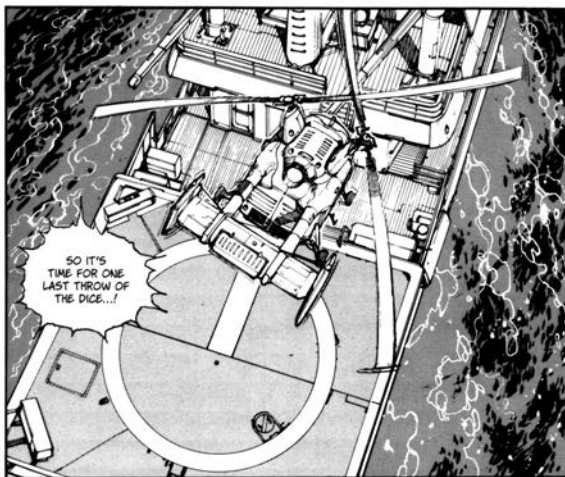
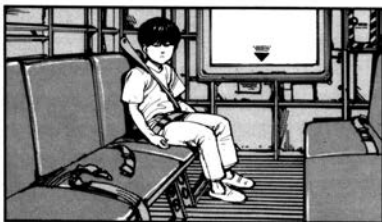
NEVER MIND.  
I DON'T WANT  
EXCUSES.

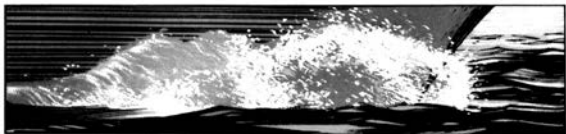


THE  
DAMAGE IS  
DONE....

























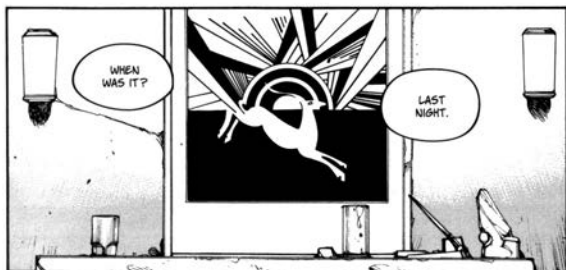


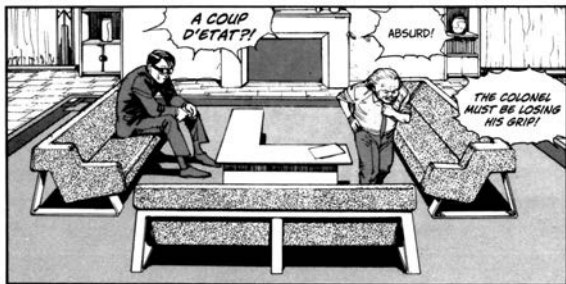


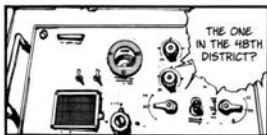


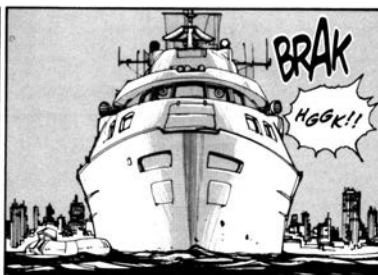


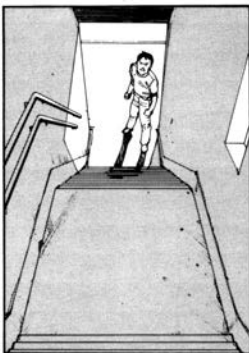




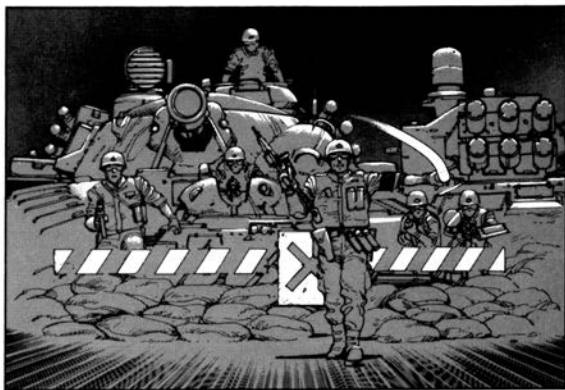








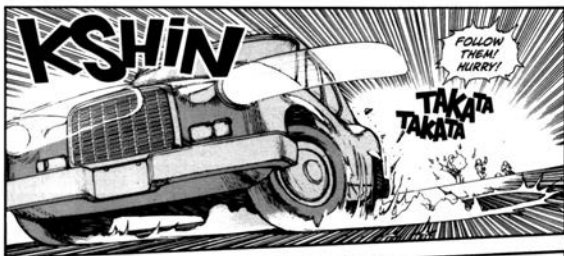




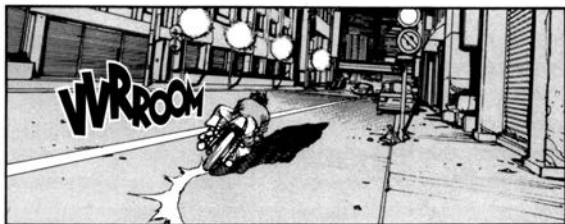


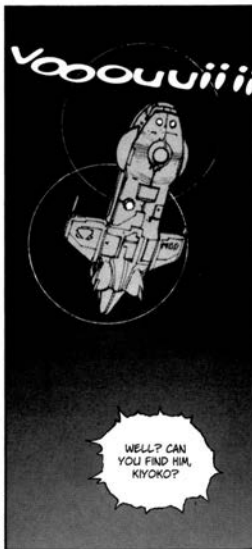
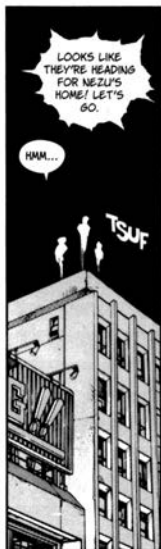




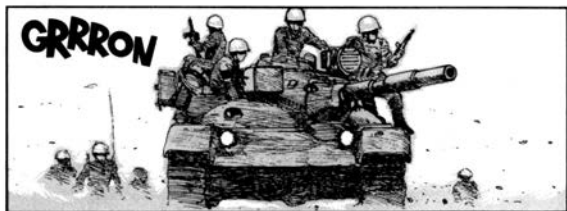


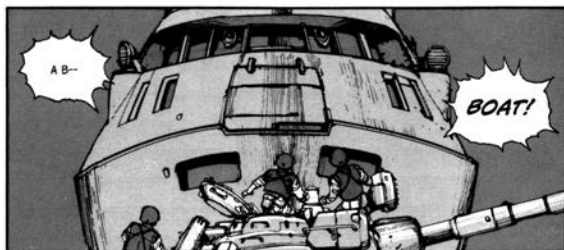


















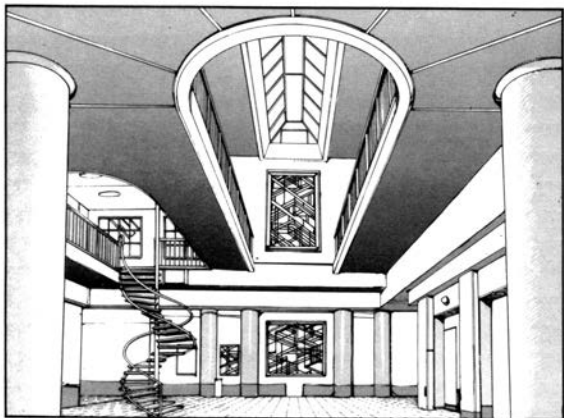




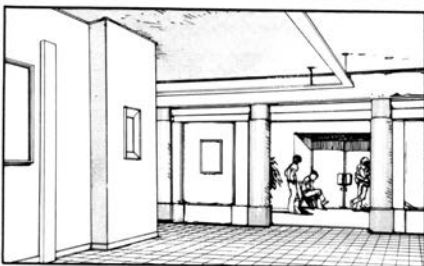




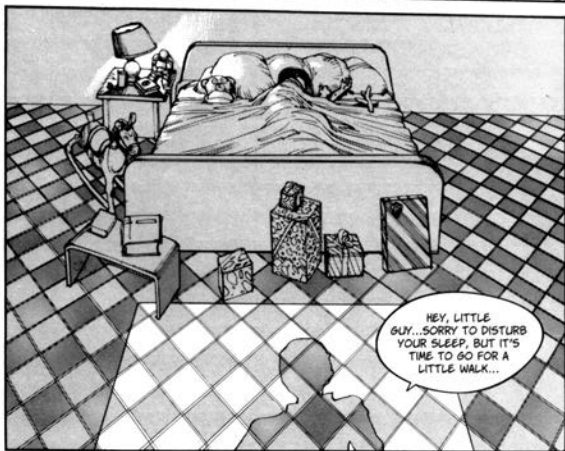
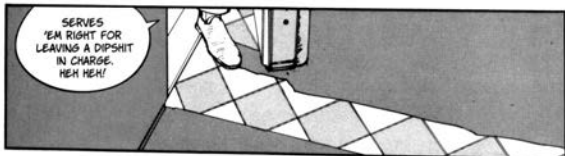








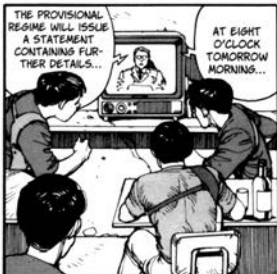
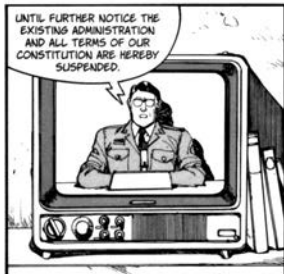


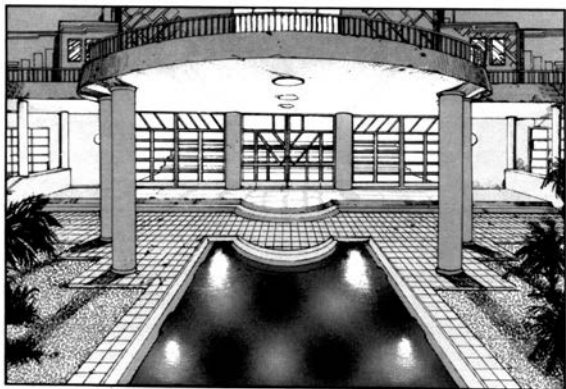
















IN FACT, WE WERE JUST GETTING SOME AIR...



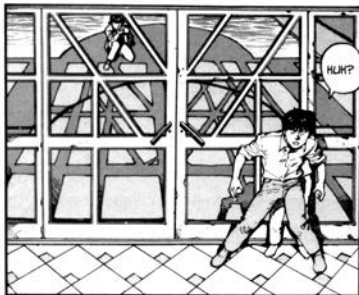
HOW COME I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE?



HEY! THAT'S THE KID WHO--!



ZULP!E



HLKH?

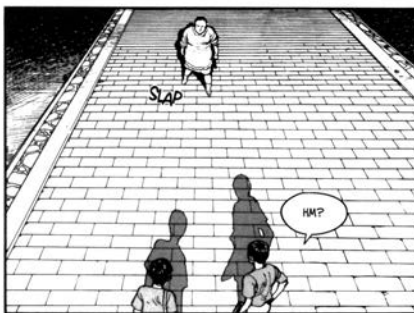














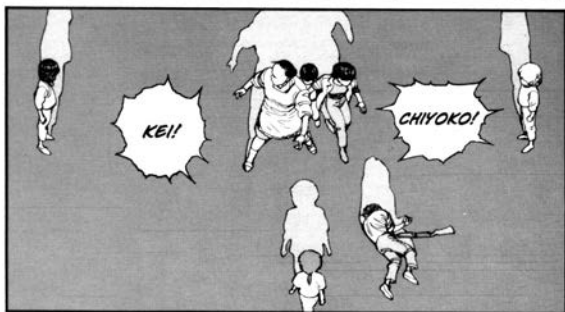




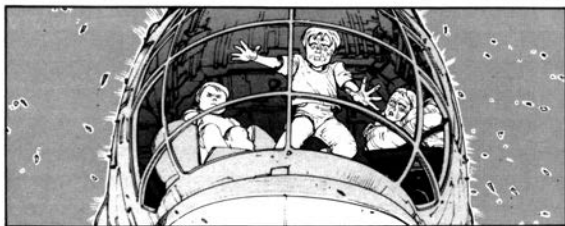
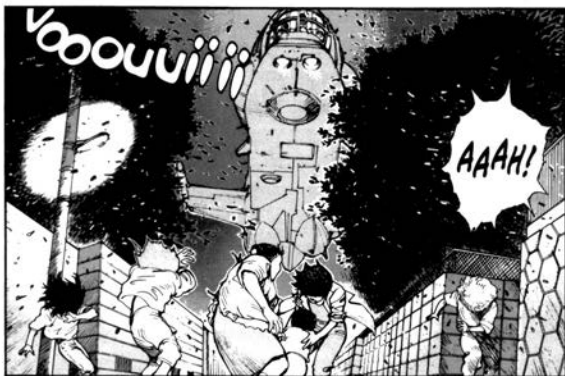
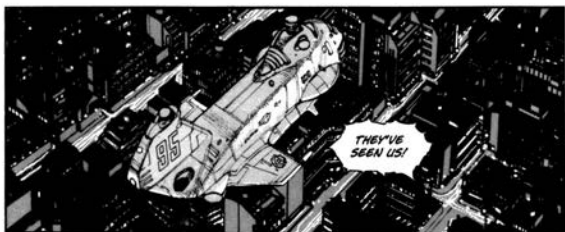




























ING...  
THAT LITTLE  
CEMENT-  
HEAD...



NEXT  
TIME, FOR  
SURE...



HUNK?

HOWEVER...



...THERE  
WERE CERTAIN  
DEVELOPMENTS I  
COULDN'T HAVE  
ANTICIPATED...

...DEVELOPMENTS THAT  
MAKE IT QUITE IMPOSSIBLE  
FOR ME TO RELINQUISH AKIRA  
AT THE PRESENT TIME. AT  
SOME LATER DATE...



...I HOPE  
PERSONALLY TO  
GO BEFORE LADY  
MIYAKO AND BEG  
HER PARDON.



**SNAP**

BE CAREFUL  
NOT TO HIT  
AKIRA.

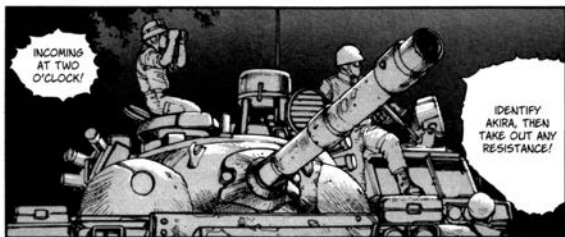


**Wop!**

**AUGHK!**

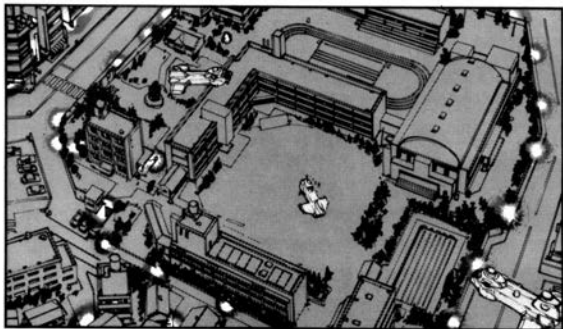
WHAT THE  
HELL!

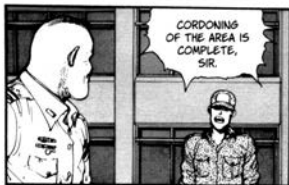


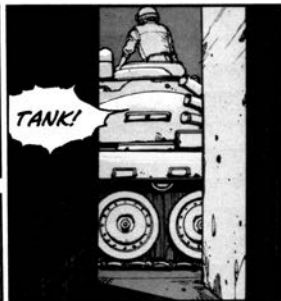




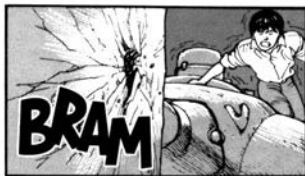
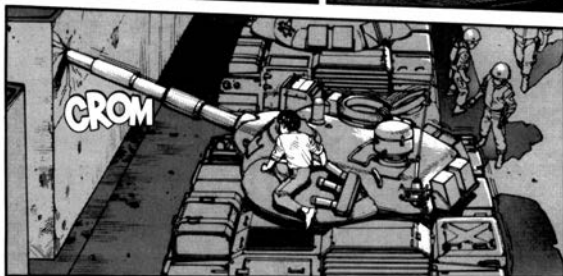


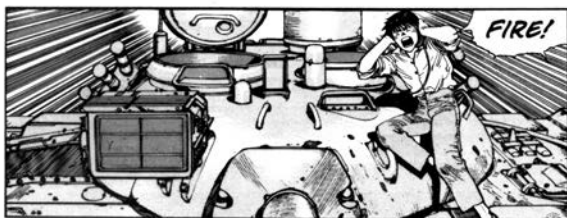




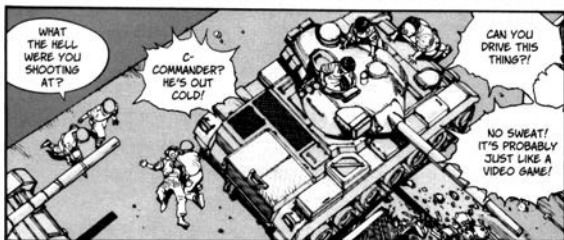
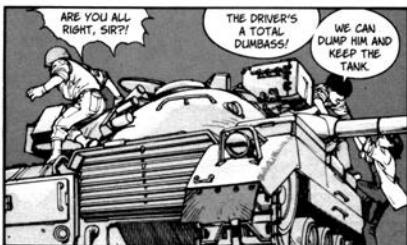




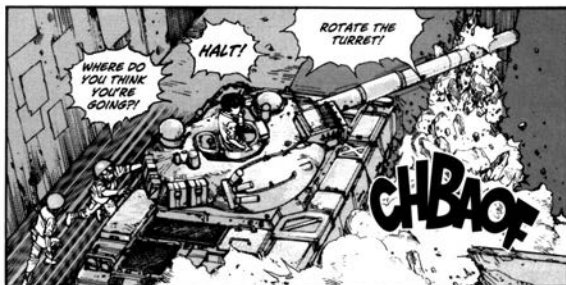
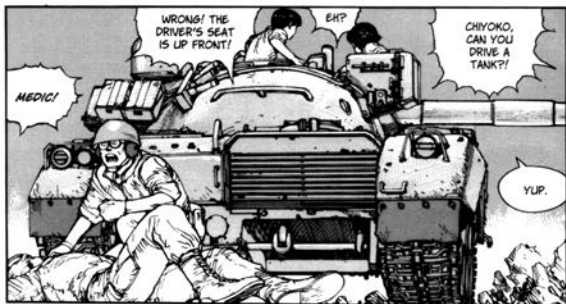










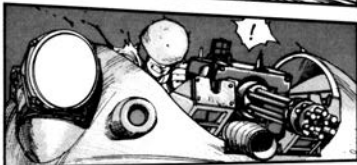


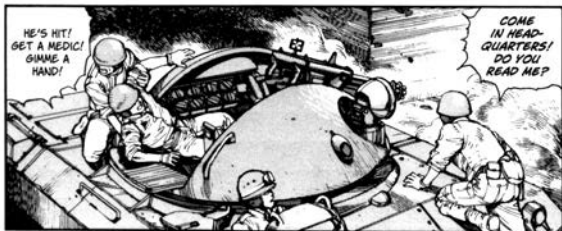








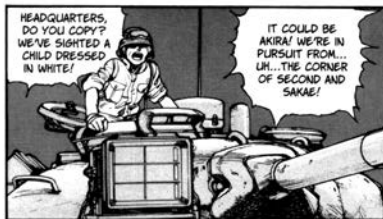
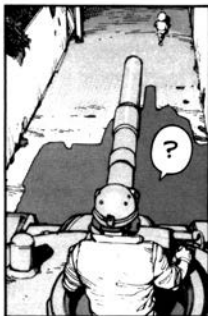
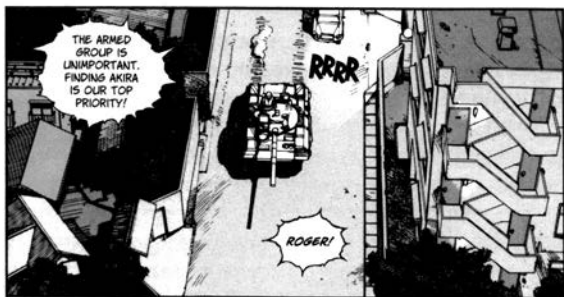












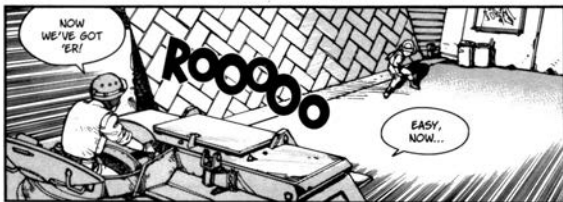
IT COULD BE  
AKIRA! WE'RE IN  
PURSUIT FROM...  
UH...THE CORNER  
OF SECOND AND  
SAKAE!











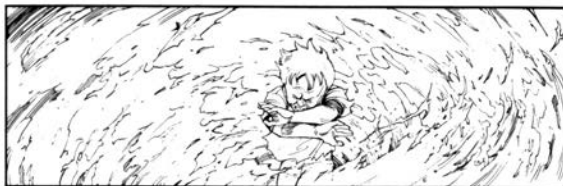






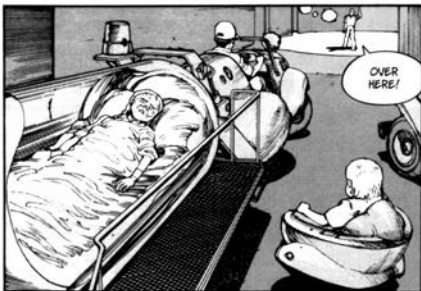
































THERE  
YOU  
ARE...

AACK--!  
WH-WHERE'S  
CHUYOKO?



...WHOSE  
HAND IS  
THIS?!



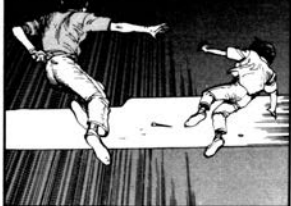












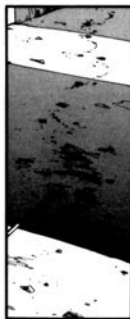




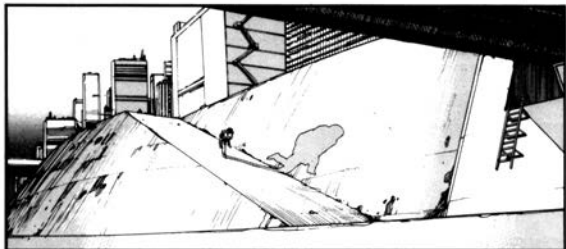
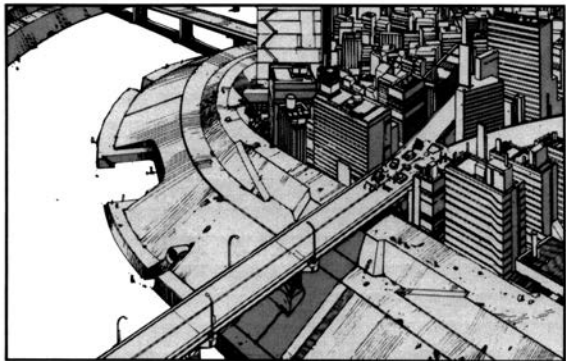


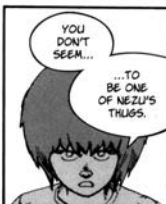


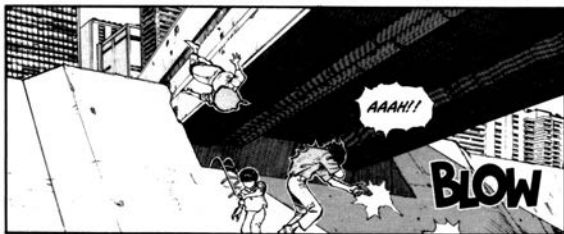






















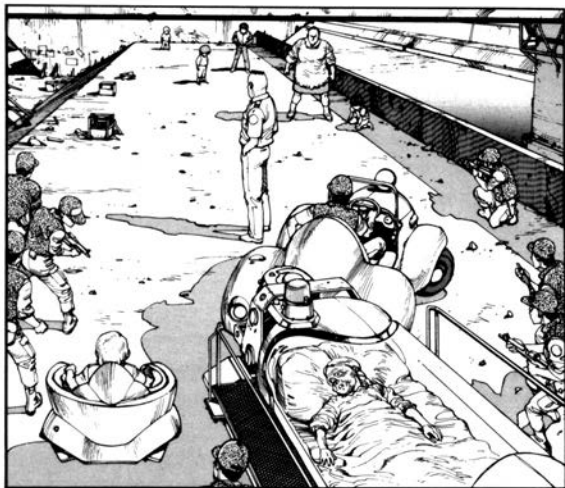








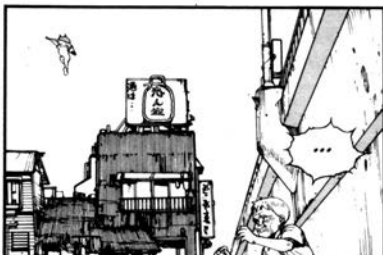


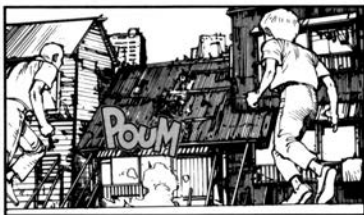










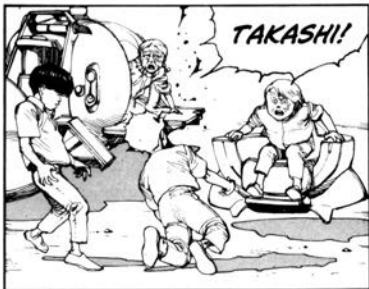






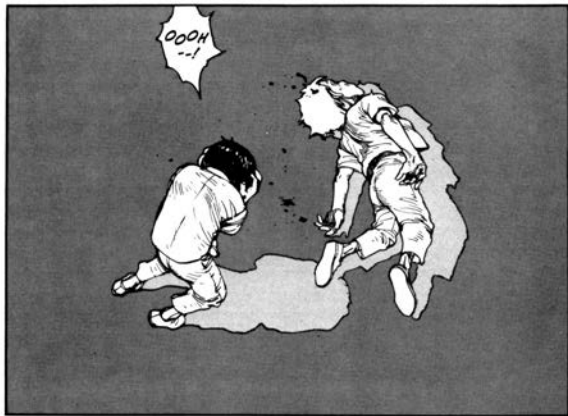
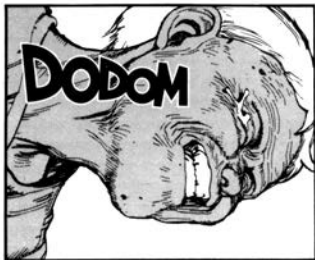




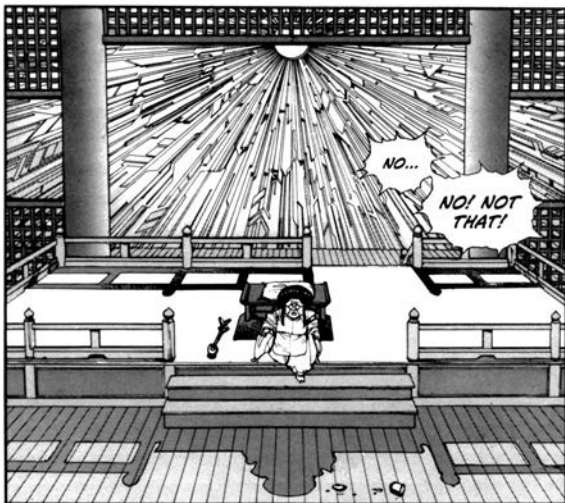












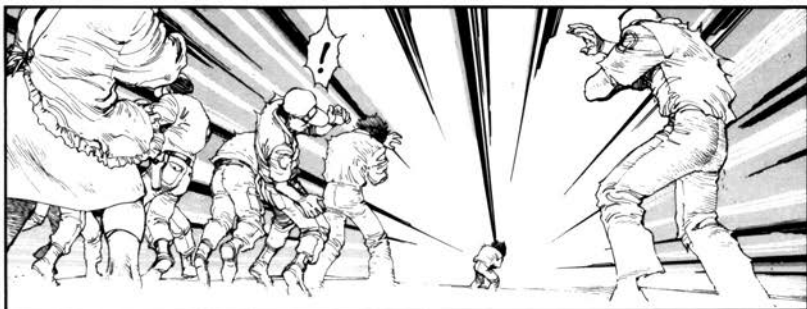




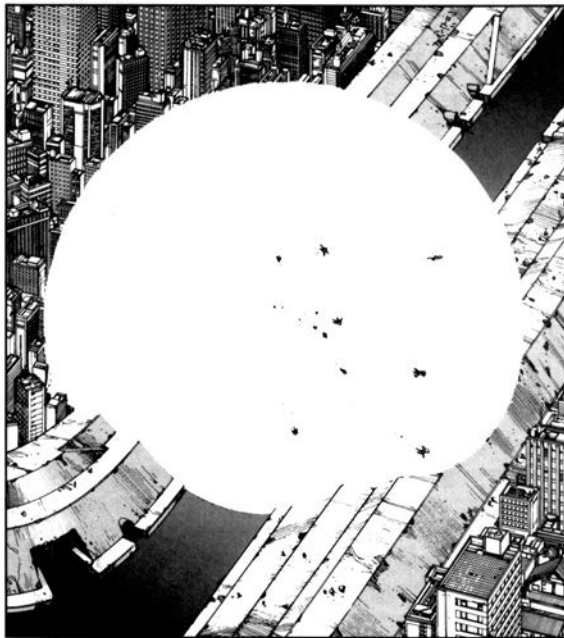


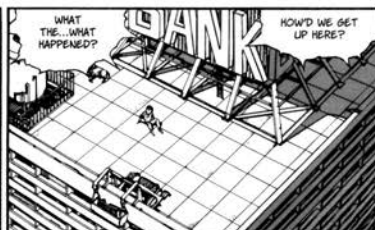
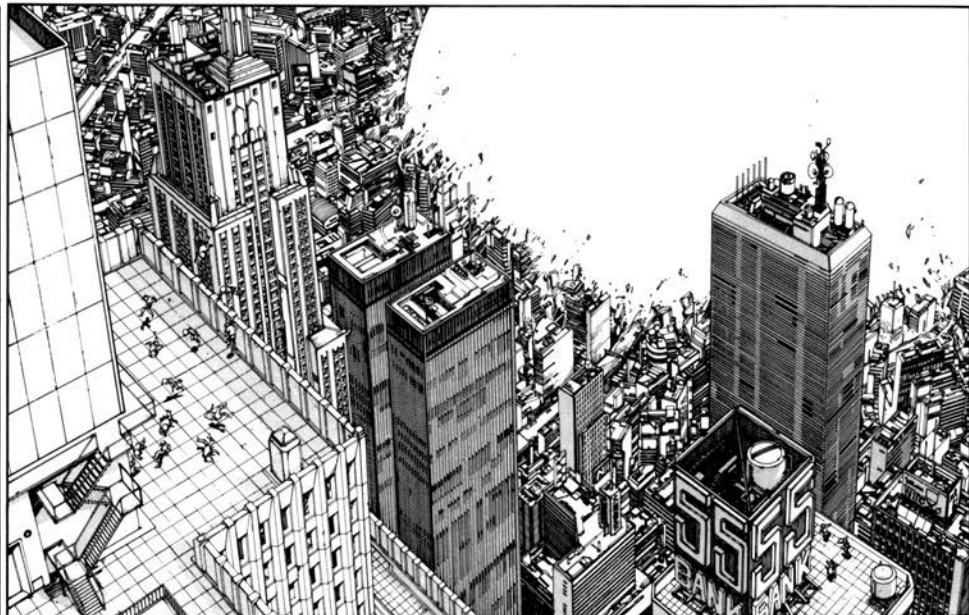


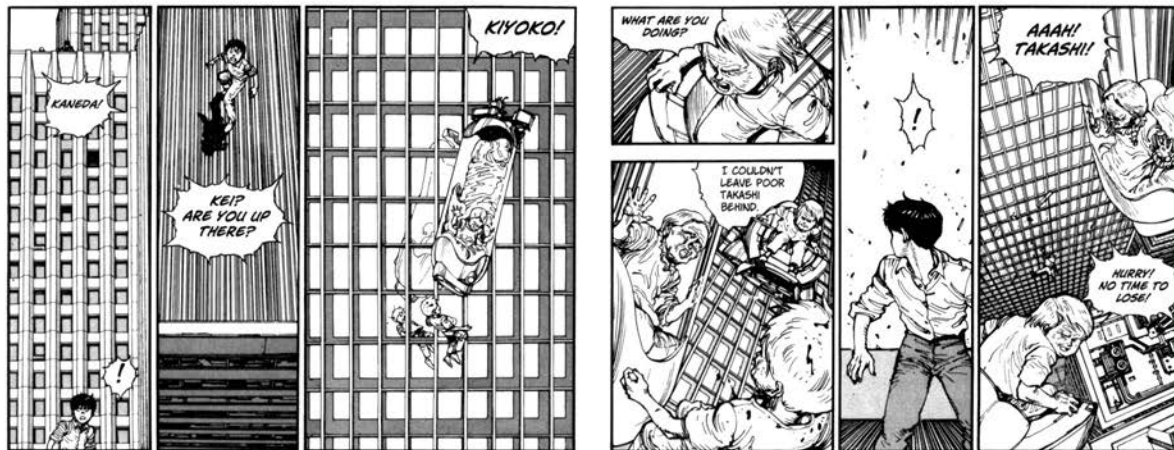










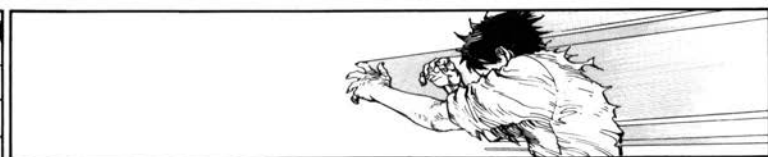




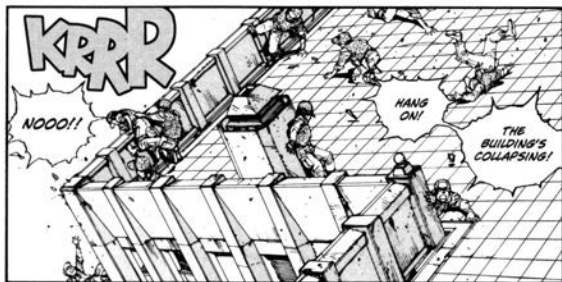


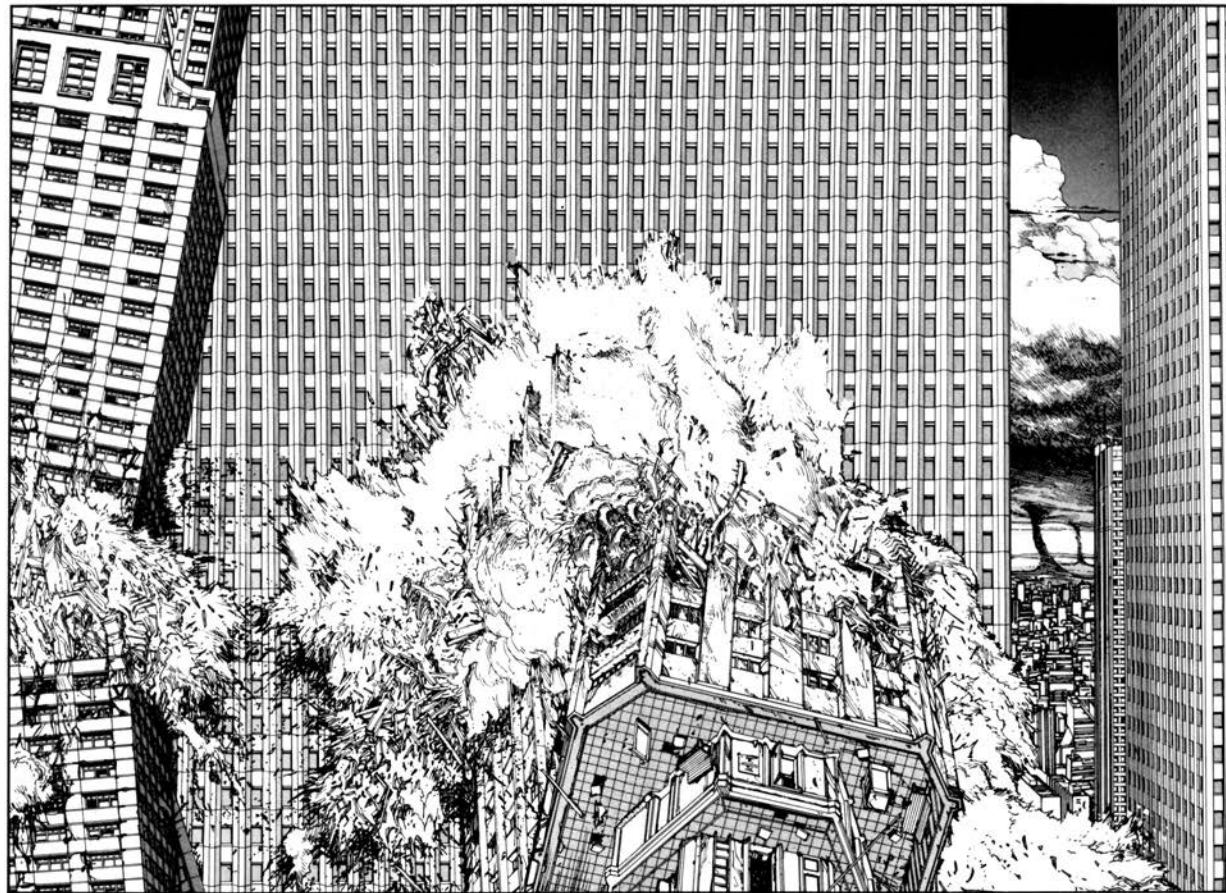


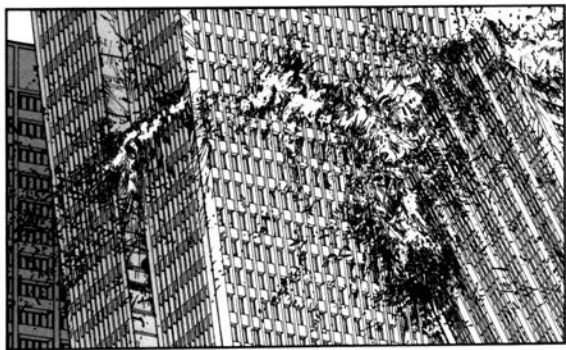






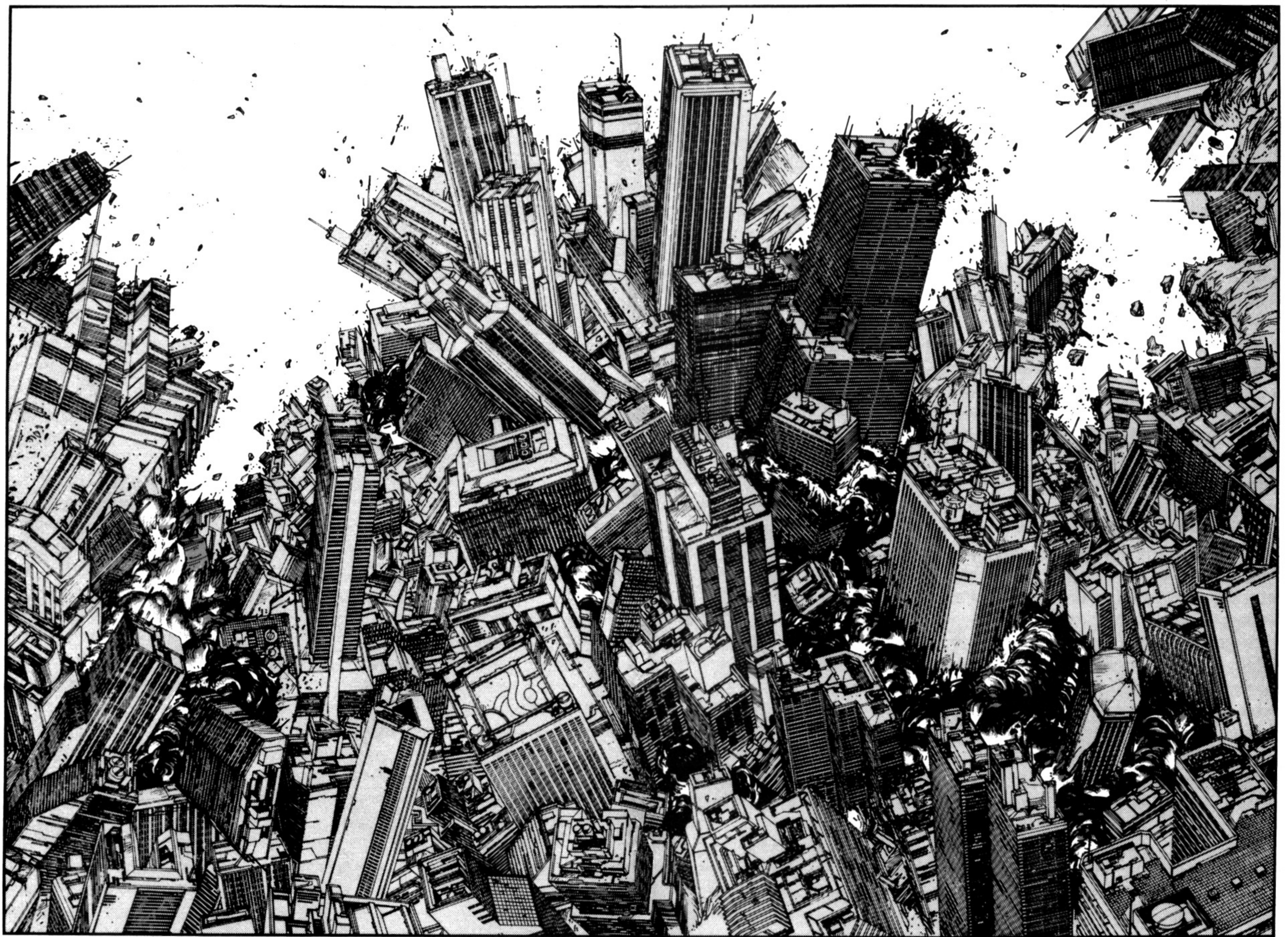




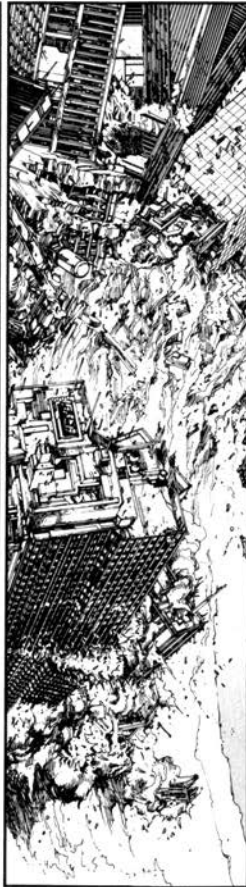
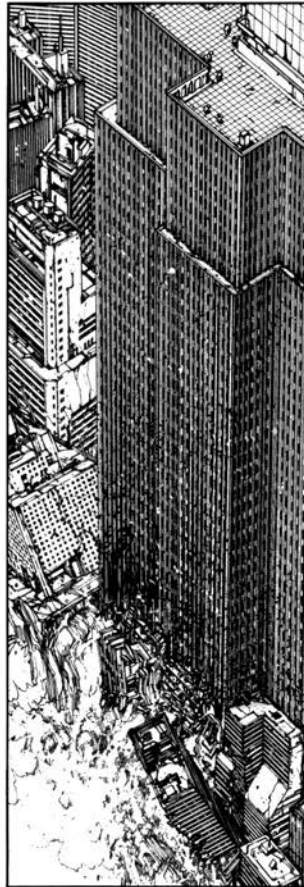






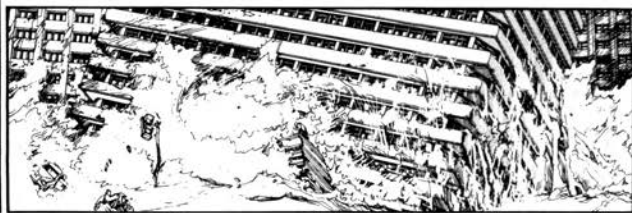








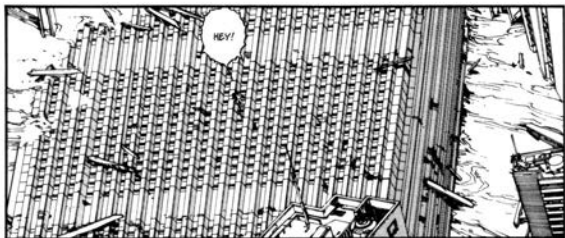


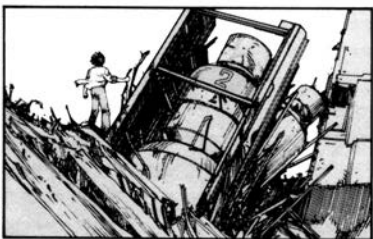


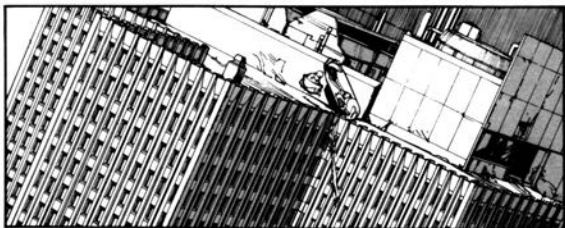










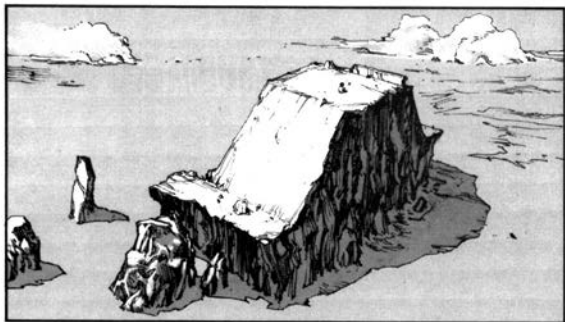




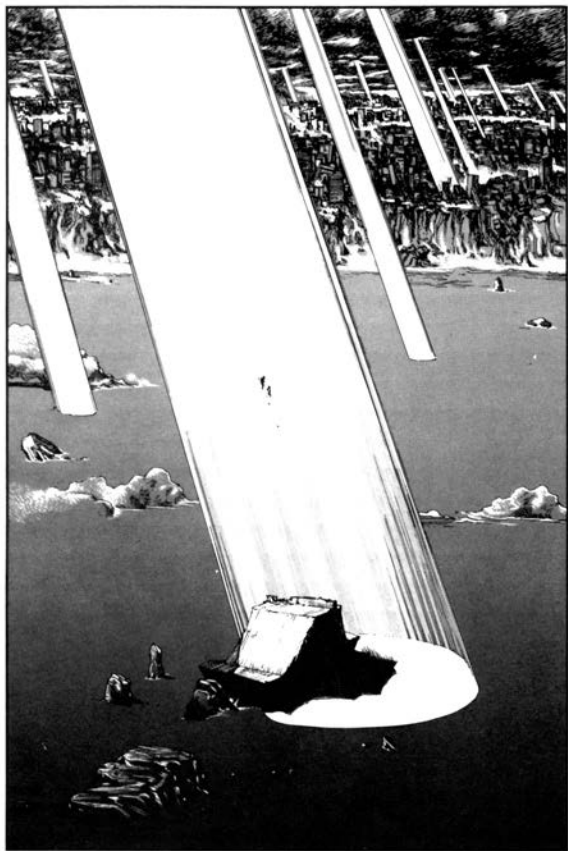














# KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Katsuhiro Otomo was born in 1954 in Japan's Miyago Prefecture, a rural province some 300 miles northeast of Tokyo. While in high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." The young artist often traveled three hours by train just to see films, and the influence of cinema is a constant thread that runs through Otomo's work.

Soon after graduating high school, Otomo moved to Tokyo with the goal of becoming a comics artist. His first professional work was *Jyu-sei (A Gun Report)*, an adaptation of the Prosper Mérimée novella *Mateo Falcone*, which appeared in the weekly magazine *Action*. Otomo went on to create a series of short stories, usually twenty to thirty pages, challenging works that captured widespread critical acclaim in Japan. A 1980 review in the *Asahi* newspaper said, "Just as the New Cinema movement had demolished the old style of Hollywood filmmaking to usher in a fresh style of movie production in America, Katsuhiro Otomo... came to Tokyo to create a new comics style and shattered the conventions existing in manga."

In 1979, publication began on Otomo's first serialized work, *Fireball*, a story built around a "man versus computer" theme. Though the series was never completed, *Fireball* marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in science-fiction themes and was the forerunner of future work that would define his comics career and firmly establish him internationally as one of the acknowledged masters of the comics medium. *Domu*, first serialized in 1980 and collected in 1983, became a best seller and was the first manga to win the coveted Science Fiction Grand Prix Award, Japan's equivalent to America's Nebula Award. The media

attention gained from this landmark achievement made Otomo one of the best-known comics authors in Japan. Critics raved about *Domu*, a story that combined terrifying paranormal genre elements with poignant observation of urban life in modern Japan. From the *Yomiuri* newspaper: "The weirdness that lurks in the seemingly peaceful living environment of a huge housing complex symbolizes the precariousness hidden at the bottom of today's living conditions in Japan."

Upon completion of *Domu*, Otomo began work on *Akira*, a two-thousand-plus-page epic of staggering illustrative virtuosity and gut-wrenching thematic power. Ten years in the making and eventually collected in six volumes, *Akira* went on to win every possible award and spawned video games, an animated feature film directed by Otomo himself — compared favorably by critics to science-fiction masterpieces such as *Blade Runner* and *A Clockwork Orange* — and a blizzard of merchandise. *Akira* has been published in virtually every language and stands not only as one of the crown jewels of manga, but is regarded by many as the finest work of graphic fiction ever created, anywhere. While the completion of *Akira* marked the beginning of Otomo's moving away from comics — his only major comics work since *Akira* has been the writing of *The Legend of Mother Sarah* — it began his odyssey as a filmmaker. After completion of the animated *Akira*, Otomo has gone on to work on a variety of animated films, including *Labyrinth Stories*, *Robot Carnival*, *Roujin Z*, *Spriggan*, and *Memories*, an anthology of adaptations of earlier Otomo comics stories. Otomo also directed the live-action *World Apartment Horror* as well as television commercials for Honda, Suntory, and Canon. Otomo lives and works in Tokyo.



# IN THE 21ST CENTURY,

the glittering Neo-Tokyo has risen from the rubble of a Tokyo destroyed by an apocalyptic telekinetic blast from a young boy called Akira — a subject of a covert government experiment gone wrong now imprisoned for three decades in frozen stasis. But Tetsuo, an unstable youth with immense paranormal abilities of his own, has done the unthinkable: he has released Akira and set into motion a chain of events that could once again destroy the city and drag the world to the brink of Armageddon. Resistance agents and an armada of government forces race against the clock to find the child with godlike powers before his unstoppable destructive abilities are unleashed!

One of the true international classics of graphic fiction and unavailable for nearly a decade in America, *Akira* has once again taken America by storm. Artist/writer/filmmaker Katsuhiro Otomo is acclaimed worldwide as a master storyteller, and *Akira* showcases Otomo at the peak of his creative form. *Akira* is a timeless, epic work of unforgettable beauty, horror, and imagination.

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